

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:**

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1. (previously presented): An ink jet recording apparatus comprising:
  - an ink jet recording head having nozzle orifices from which inkdrops are ejected;
  - an ink storage unit for storing ink to be supplied to the recording head;
  - an ink flow passage communicating the ink storage unit and the recording head;
  - a valve unit for opening/closing the ink flow passage;
  - a capping unit for sealing the nozzle orifices, provided with an air hole communicating with the atmosphere;
  - an air valve for opening/closing the air hole;
  - a suction pump for reducing pressure in an internal space of the capping unit to discharge inkdrops from the nozzles when the capping unit seals the nozzle orifices; and
  - a control unit for controlling the valve unit, the capping unit and the suction pump in such order that:
    - the suction pump decompresses the internal space of the capping unit under a condition that the valve unit closes the ink flow passage and the capping unit seals the nozzle orifice; and
    - the valve unit opens the ink flow passage after a predetermined time period elapses wherein the air valve always closes the air hole while the suction pump decompresses the internal space of the capping unit.